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BY HOYT & HUMPHREYS.

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## HOW I SPENT MY NEW YEAR.

My mother died when I was very young, leaving me to the care of an indulgent father, who petted and spoiled me until he met with a handsome, cold-hearted widow lady, with one child about my own age, whom he married. I pass over the martyrdom of my childhood, and on to the eventful New Year's day which forms the subject of my story.

It was a few days before Christmas, when my stepmother remarked, "I suppose, Mary, that Fred Sterling will be home in a day or two."

"Oh, yes," replied her daughter, "Fanny told me that she expected him to-morrow."

"Then he will likely call upon you on New Year's; he will be glad to meet you again, for I always thought so much of you when you were a child."

I felt rather astonished to hear this conversation addressed to my step-sister, for I had always looked upon Fred almost as my own private property. He had played together when we were children; and although Mary would sometimes join our play, she was always sure to quarrel and vow never to speak to us again. When I was at the age of fourteen, Fred went to Europe to complete his education, and now, when four years had passed away, although I thought but little of the childish engagement that existed between us, yet there was one figure mixed with all my dreams, and it bore a striking resemblance to Fred Sterling.

"Why, I thought Fred Sterling belonged to Rosie!" said my father, stroking down my curls.

"Oh, no!" replied my mother, very coolly, "he liked Rose well enough to play with, but Mary was the favorite."

Notwithstanding that step-mother had given her opinion so decidedly in favor of Fred's attachment to Mary, she looked rather worried, and at length remarked, "Rose, why don't you put up your hair? I think you are too old to wear curls, for you know that you and Mary are to be considered young ladies now, and on New Year's day you will receive calls."

This was quite a new idea to me. I had always worn my hair in curls, and it had never occurred to me that it could be worn in any other way. Fred, too, had liked my curls, and when he left had cut off a little ringlet, pressed it to his lips, and said he should always keep it.

To tell the truth, also, I had an idea curls were the most becoming to me. I was, however, saved the trouble of replying, for my father looked up, and twisted a lock of my hair over his finger, exclaiming:

"No, indeed! Rosie's curls must not be put up until they are gray," and he turned away and passed his hand over his eyes.

I had a portrait of my own mother, taken when she was about my own age; her hair hung in glossy ringlets, and I sometimes thought I bore a great resemblance to her, only that she was beautiful. Thus I knew why my father passed his hand over his eyes.

My stepmother bit her lips, and seemed lost in thought. Presently she looked up, and with a bland smile, remarked, "Rosa, dear, why don't you go and make your aunt Pattie a visit? She is always waiting for you, is a kind old soul, and loves you dearly."

Aunt Pattie was my father's eldest and only remaining sister; but this was the first time I had ever heard her merits acknowledged by my present mother. Often, on the contrary, had my blood boiled to hear her called vulgar and "country-fied."

I replied that I intended making her a visit very soon.

"Well, Rosa," she continued, "you are so fond of making others happy, why don't you go after Christmas and spend New Year's with her? She will feel more lonely at such a time than at any other, and I know she would enjoy having you with her so much."

I looked up, astonished at this mood, but I saw the scheme at once and resolved to baffle her; so I replied that I preferred making my visit after New Year's.

My father, however, with a mischievous twinkle in me, remarked, "You had better go a few days after Christmas, Rosie; your aunt Pattie would so much like to have you with her then."

I consented after this, of course. But when alone in my room, I puzzled myself to discover what my father meant.

The day of my departure came, and my father and I set forth on our journey. The abode of my aunt Pattie was in a beautiful, but rather lonely country place, with but little society, and a few poor families scattered here and there; with their dwellings now almost buried in snow-banks, which looked as though they would never melt away. I loved my aunt Pattie very much, but I sighed as I thought of spending this usually gay season in such a dreary looking region.

Just then, however, we came in sight of my aunt's house, and there stood the dear old lady at her gate, watching for us. Her smile was so bright and her look was so happy as she welcomed us, that my gloomy feelings were instantly dispelled, and by the time that my father, after having chatted a little while, took his leave, I began to feel quite lively. Before he went, however, he drew me to him, and as he kissed me, whispered, with a mischievous smile, "Now, Rosie, don't lose your heart out here," and he was gone.

As I looked around I thought there was out little need of such a caution—my heart was certainly safe unless I buried it in one of the snow-banks.

"Oh, my dear child!" exclaimed Aunt Pattie, drawing me closer to her, "I am so glad you made up your mind to spend the holidays with your poor old aunt, for I always feel more lonely at such times than at any other."

I was glad too, and I felt that I was more than repaid for the sacrifice I had made.

"There are others who will be delighted to see you, too, my child," she continued, "there are the Lanetons, who are continually inquiring for 'Miss Rose.'"

The Lanetons were a poor family residing near my aunt, who were striving to earn an honest living. During the year I had spent with my aunt, previous to my father's second marriage, I had frequently visited them, and I had never been at my aunt's since without calling.

"Are they all well?" I inquired.

"Yes," replied my aunt, "all but the youngest child, who is confined to her bed by the spine complaint, and the old grandmother, who is blind."

"Well, Rose, we shall not be quite alone on New Year's day," said my aunt, in the evening, "for I have invited a whole family to dine with us."

"Who are they?" I inquired.

"Oh, I shall not tell you," she replied, "I am going to surprise you; one is an old friend of yours."

"The Willis family, I suppose, and Sarah, the old friend," said I.

Aunt Pattie laughed, but said nothing. Sarah Willis and I had always played together when I lived with my aunt; and from this fact she imagined that we were very dear friends. Yet why we had sought each other's society I cannot tell.

Certain it is we never met without quarrelling. This childish antipathy I had always maintained towards her since, and I therefore received this intelligence with no great degree of pleasure.

The next day my aunt was too busy in the kitchen, making pies and preparing for the morrow, which was New Year's; and I helped her, feeling that I was much happier there than I would have been at home. But there was one figure that, notwithstanding my heroic resolves, still flitted through my mind. In imagination I saw Fred and Mary together, and it gave me a secret pang. But I knew that this was foolish. Why should I care for one from whom I had been parted four years? He might be changed. Probably he was conceited and egotistical; of course he had forgotten all about me, and very likely he might be engaged to some one else. Endeavoring to banish his image from my mind, I set out about dark, with a basket well filled with good things on my arm, to visit the Lanetons.

"Oh, mother, here comes Miss Rose," exclaimed Maggie Laneton, a little curly-headed pet of my own.

"Oh, Miss Rose! Miss Rose!" was echoed; and I was immediately surrounded by a bevy of children.

"Do give Miss Rose room to come in," said Mrs. Laneton, as she extended her hand, saying, "You're welcome, Miss. You look the same as ever," and she handed me a chair, "only a great deal prettier."

"I cannot see how you look, Miss Rose," cried in the old grandmother in a mournful tone; "but there is your same sweet voice. Thank Heaven, I can hear that."

"Miss Rose, won't you come here, please?" said a weak, childish voice. I turned to the bed, where lay a pale, thin little girl. A small white hand was slipped in mine, and fixing her large blue

eyes upon me, she said, "I'm so glad you have come, Miss Rose."

I leaned over and kissed the little sufferer, and tried to talk to her; but her sad face brought tears to my eyes.

"I will leave you now and call another time," was uttered in a deep, manly voice.

I turned quickly in the direction from whence the sound came, for the dusky twilight had prevented my noticing that there was a gentleman in the room, and I caught but a slight glimpse of him as he left the house.

"He is very kind," said Mrs. Laneton, in answer to my look; "he is a stranger who came here with Mrs. Newton yesterday, and dropped in a few minutes since to give my poor girl, as he said, a New Year's present."

As I walked home with the empty basket on my arm, I felt fully repaid for spending my holidays in the country.

The next day aunt Pattie examined my wardrobe, and was some time in choosing on two or three to see which was most becoming, and at length decided on a mazarine blue silk she said looked well with a fair complexion.

I laughingly submitted to be turned and twisted in all directions; to have my hair first brushed over my forehead, then off; to see my curls arranged in all possible ways; in short, to be treated like a large doll about to be dressed for some wonderful occasion.

"Aunt Pattie," said I, as we were sitting together, waiting for our company, "old maids are very happy, are they not?"

"I am," she replied, "if you consider me any rule; why, my child, do you think of being one?"

"Yes," said I, "I would like to be an old maid, and have you to live with me."

Aunt Pattie smiled, but before she could reply the door opened and a group entered. Foremost, to my surprise, was the figure I had caught a glimpse of the evening before, and whose image had been flitting through my mind for the past four years. I was almost lost to consciousness when Fanny Sterling threw her arms around my neck and kissed me, exclaiming:

"Why don't you say how glad you are to see us all? Here have I been looking forward to meeting you to-day ever since I came to the country. Let me introduce you to my brother Fred," she continued.

"I hope," remarked the gentleman, extending his hand, "that an introduction to brother Fred is not necessary. You have not forgotten me, have you, Rose?"

There was the same frankness as of old. How I envied his easy manners, for I could feel the color come and go in my cheek. To my relief, Mr. and Mrs. Sterling now came forward to shake hands with me, while the latter remarked:

"I don't wonder at your astonishment, Rose. But we are making a visit to some friends out here, and your aunt invited us to come and surprise you."

I was soon quite at my ease; and now I had time to note the changes which four years had made in Fred. The boyish figure had become more manly, and his manner had acquired a greater finish.

That was a pleasant dinner party.—Every one looked smiling and happy.

"Miss 'Rosalie,'" said Fred, "this evening, when you get rid of company, will you favor me for a sleigh ride?"

"Well, I declare," broke in Fanny, "what impudence! I suppose, Mr. Fred, the next you will ask us to please to go."

"Probably Fred wishes to talk over old times with Rose," said Mrs. Sterling, "and feels too bashful to do it in our presence."

"Will you go, Rose?" he asked.

I promised, and at dusk Fred's sleigh stopped at the door. I was soon in, and we were flying over the snow banks, while the merry bells kept time to our voices.

"Did you see my father before you left home?" I inquired.

"Yes," he replied, "I called there to see you the evening you left, supposing you were at home; for although my father told him some time since that we'd spend our New Year's out here, he didn't mention that you were coming."

"Did you see Mary?" I asked.

"Yes," said he; "do you recollect, Rose, how she and I used to quarrel together?"

We went on talking about old times, and about the childish engagement we had made with each other, and somehow the past at this point becoming connected with the present, our conversation interested us, and we scarcely knew how time passed.

When I returned to Aunt Pattie a new diamond ring was glistening on my finger. She smiled as she noticed it, and inquired if I still clung to my resolution of

being an old maid.

The remainder of my visit passed pleasantly away. My father came to take me home, and the Sterling family accompanied us to the city. My stepmother received me in her usual style, omitting to call me "dear," as it was no longer necessary. She also forgot to inquire after the "kind old soul" whom I had been visiting.—The conversation soon turned upon New Year's day, and I received a history of Mary's conquests.

"Frederick Sterling called upon Mary the evening you left," said her mother, "but strange to say, he has not been since; he didn't even make a New Year's call."

"Perhaps," observed my father, mischievously, "he was out of town."

"Yes," replied his wife, "very likely."

In the course of the evening Mr. Frederick Sterling made his appearance, and Mary immediately applied herself to the task of entertaining him, so that I had but a small chance of saying anything. After he had gone, and my stepmother and I were alone, she said:

"My dear, you know I suppose, that Mr. Sterling is a beau of Mary's; they thought a great deal of each other as children, and the other evening he was delighted to meet her again after so long an absence; now what I have to say to you is, that I think it would be a good plan for us both to keep out of the drawing-room when he calls, for lovers always like to be alone together."

I was prevented from replying to this observation by the entrance of my father and Mary.

"Fred Sterling," said the former, addressing his wife, "has requested my permission to his marriage with a certain young lady of our acquaintance."

"Ah!" replied his wife, with a pleased look, "I was expecting this; it will be a splendid match for her, he is so well educated and gentlemanly, and his family are in the very best society. Really, Mary," she continued, turning to her daughter, "I congratulate you."

"But the name of the young lady to whom I referred was not Mary; it was Rosalie," dryly said my father.

My step-mother opened her eyes in astonishment.

"Why," she replied, "I thought all his attentions were directed to Mary; however, I am rather glad she didn't fancy him, as he is not altogether the match I should desire for her."

"Well," replied my father, "he suits me perfectly. I should not desire a better husband for my daughter."

And so we married, and happily settled. Aunt Pattie gave up her lonely residence in the country, and came to live with me. My father is a constant visitor, and seems to enjoy being with us. Fanny has proved a sister indeed; she sometimes accuses me of having stolen her brother from her; but then she throws her arms around me and says she has found a new sister.

The beginning of my happiness I date from that eventful New Year's day, when I sought to add to the enjoyment of others. Fred often speaks of my visit to the Lanetons, and says it was the sight of their love for me, more than anything else, which assured him that in obtaining a renewal of my promise, his happiness would be complete.

"THEY SAY:—Who are 'They?'—the cowed monks who glide with shrouded faces in the procession of life, muttering, in an unknown tongue, words of mysterious import. Who are they? The midnight assassin of reputation, who lurks in the by-lanes of society, with dagger-tongue, sharpened by invention and venomous malice, to draw the blood of innocence—the hyena-like banquet on the dead.—Who are they? They are a multitude no man can number—black-souled families of Slander, searching for victims in every city, town and village, wherever the heart of humanity throbs or the ashes of mortality find rest. Oh, cowards, cowards! Give me the bold brigand who thunders along the highway with flashing weapon that cuts the sunbeam as well as the shade, give me the pirate who unfurls the black flag, emblem of his terrible trade, and shows the plank which your doomed feet must tread; but save me from the 'They Say's' of society, whose knives are hidden in velvet sheaths, whose bridge of death is woven in flowers, and who spread with invisible poison even the spotless whiteness of the winding sheet."

POWER IN A WOMAN'S EYE.—A lady when the conversation turned on dynamics, asked the late George Stephenson, the celebrated engineer, "What do you consider the most powerful force in nature?" "I will soon answer that," said he, "it is the eye of a woman who looks with affection on a man; should he go to the uttermost ends of the earth the recollection of that look will bring him back."

A WARM BATH WAGER.—Smith was a man who never permitted himself to be outdone; he could do whatever anybody else could. Smith met Brown in a bathroom and Brown, knowing the other's peculiar conceit, said that he (Brown) could endure a hotter bath than any living man. Thereat Smith fired up, and a bet was made. Two bathing-tubs were prepared, with six inches of water in each. The fellows stripped, and, separated by a cloth partition, each one got in and let on the hot water at the word—the wager being who should stay in the longest with the hot water running. Smith drew up his feet as far as possible from the boiling stream, while Brown pulled out the plug in the bottom of his tub. After about half a minute, quoth Smith:

"How is it, Brown—pretty warm?"

"Yes," said the other; "it's getting almighty hot, but I guess I can hold out a minute yet."

"So can I," answered Smith. Scis-s-s!—squash!—lightning!—it's awful!"

Fifteen seconds, equal to half an hour by Smith's imaginary watch.

"I say, over there—how is it now?"

"O, it's nearly up to the bilin' pint—O Christopher!" answered the diabolical villain, who was lying in the empty tub, while the hot water passed out by the escape pipe.

By this time Smith was splurging about like a boiled lobster, and called out again:

"I say, over there—how is it now?"

"Hot as the Devil!" replied Brown; "but whew!—scis-s-s!—guess I can hold out another minute!"

"The hell's fires you can!" shrieked the now boiling Smith, who rolled out and bolted through the partition, expecting to find the other quite cooked.

"You infernal rascal! why didn't you put the plug in?"

"Why I didn't agree to," said the importunate joker; "why'n't thunder didn't you leave yours out?"

A TOUCH OF SPRING.—A few mornings since a poetically-inclined knight of the quill, who breathed a little balmy air, gave vent to the following:

The Spring stirred uneasily in her Winter's sleep, and preface her waking by a sweet, unconscious smile. How that smile has touched the magic links of association, gilding them into beauty! The soft air seemed suggestive of fragrant violets, round leaved anemones and arbutus pink as a sea-shell. Its waves broke into music at the faintest sound that thrilled their warm depths—depths that sighed for the robins and bluebirds with which they are yet to be vocal. On such a day, when the earth seemed like a white-robed bride, all sunshine and happy smiles, happier tears, one readily accepted the pagan fancy that the feathered race were approaching their annual jubilee of love, and about to choose mates for the vernal year, the year that in this climate at least, has not yet dawned.

PREDICTED TWENTY-FOUR YEARS AGO.—It is a remarkable fact that the present secession movement was foreshadowed just as it has occurred, in a work called the "Partisan Leader," attributed to the pen of Judge Upshur, of Virginia, who was killed by the bursting of the Peace-maker. In that work, under the guise of a novel, it was professed that coming events were described. The Gulf States, it was described, had seceded in consequence of the election of a Northern President, and Virginia and other border States were about following suit. An attempt was made to form treatise with foreign nations, and free trade was established, which gave the South an unexampled career of prosperity. The current of events twenty-four years later has given these predictions the form of fulfilled facts.

NORTH CAROLINA.—A Southern rights mass meeting of the second Congressional District will be held at Newbern, on the 25th and 26th inst. Southern rights men from all parts of the State are invited.

The Goldsboro' adjourned mass meeting will take place at Charlotte, on the memorable 20th of May. At this meeting every county in the State is expected to be represented. The State rights men of the old North State, it would seem, do not despair of being yet able to place her in her true position.

NO SECESSION IN MISSOURI.—The following resolution, offered in the Missouri State Convention, on the 20th instant, was voted down by 23 yeas to 69 nays:

Resolved, That in the event of the refusal by the Northern States of the Union to agree upon a just settlement of the slavery question, and the border States disavow their connection with the General Government, the State of Missouri will not hesitate to take her stand with her sister slave States of the South.

A lady, on separating from her husband, changed her religion, being determined, she said, to avoid his company in this world and the next too.

A Mississippi exchange gets off the following on an editorial confrere:

"The editor of the Broad-Axe is married. Look out for hatchets."

VESSEL FIRED INTO.—Yesterday afternoon, about 3 o'clock, while the wind was blowing heavy from the North-East, a schooner crossed the bar, and was beating up the channel abreast of the beach of Morris' Island, when she having attracted the attention of some of the sentinels, one of the batteries fired several blank cartridges at her for the purpose of bringing her to, which the Captain of the vessel paid no attention to, but kept on his course, when a shotted gun was discharged, the ball from which it is supposed struck her in "the bulwarks," when she put about and proceeded down near the bar and anchored.

During the firing it is said that the schooner displayed the United States ensign, but as her character and not her nationality was in question, she should immediately have come to and held intercourse with the commander on the island, instead of acting in manner that produced the impression that she intended to force a passage. Soon after the firing took place, a boat from Fort Sumter visited Morris' Island, sent by Major Anderson to make inquiry into the cause of the vessel having been shot at, and also to request permission for his boat to proceed to the schooner; and it is reported that the boat did go to the "suspicious vessel," but of this we have no certain information.

About six o'clock last evening, the steamer General Clinch, with Lieut. T. B. Huger, was sent from the city to look after the schooner, and investigate her character, but after proceeding some distance down the channel, they were unable to discover anything of her, and supposed that she had gone to sea.

As the wind was blowing very strong from the North-east, she will no doubt, take a Southerly course.—*Charleston Courier.*

AMUSING IGNORANCE.—The *Wilmington Herald* tells the following, which would be more amusing but for the reflection that such ignorance as this bears its full share in shaping State policy:

Patience is a virtue which ought to characterize the people of North Carolina in an eminent degree, for they are called upon to exercise it so often that unless they are very poor scholars, they must be imbued with its very spirit.—Some people call it by a different name, but, after all, it may be that the slowness with which *news* is circulated among the people has a great deal to do with the formation of their character. We heard there was a man in town the other day, from a neighboring county, who, when something was said about secession, remarked, that he supposed that idea had been abandoned long ago; that nobody would carry out that threat, to be sure; and when asked "what he thought about South Carolina, for instance?" he said he didn't know anything particular about that State—that he hadn't been to town for three months, and hadn't heard anything from there! He was utterly lost in amazement when he learned that not only South Carolina had seceded, but that a new Government had been formed at the South.

A DAMP PLACE BEST FOR SITTING HENS.—A correspondent of the *London Daily Chronicle* says hens should sit in a damp, rather than a dry place, for the following reasons:—"The germ of the egg floats uppermost within and against the shell, in order that it may meet the genial warmth of the breast of the fowl. We must therefore, in hatching, apply most warmth to that part only; the egg being supplied with only a limited quantity of moisture, is thus arranged to prevent evaporation from a large surface, as the egg is only very warm at the part in contact with the fowl, until the blood-searching nourishment for the embryo, have surrounded the inner surface of the shell, when the whole egg becomes gradually warm, and eventually of an equal temperature."

GREATLY LIKE A WOMAN.—A couple of Americans in Arizona, having fallen in love with a beautiful Mexican girl, resolved to fight for the prize, which they did. One of them was mortally wounded, and the other hurt so it is supposed he will be crippled for life; and the next day the girl for whom they fought and bled ran off with another man, who was a particular friend of the belligerents, and through whose means they had been induced to fight.

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